

### **Bill Increases Access To Quality Care**

Sarasota, Florida -- Congressman Buchanan (FL-13) will introduce legislation today to establish a pilot day care program for Veterans Administration (VA) patients, employees and others at the Bay Pines VA Medical Center in Florida.

"This bill will increase veterans' access to quality health care," said Buchanan. "The VA already offers excellent health care services to area veterans. But they need to be able to access it. Providing day care services will make it much easier for area veterans to take advantage of those services. It will also help employees focus on the patients' needs, knowing that their child is being cared for nearby."

The children's day care and child development center at Bay Pines would be available to veterans receiving treatment, employees of the VA and veterans service organizations, active duty members of the Armed Forces within the region, and VA contractors.

Bay Pines VA Regional Office employee Marilyn Tiburcio said, "As an Army veteran and the daughter of a career soldier, I have seen first-hand, how child development centers contribute to a family's quality of life. As a parent and VA employee, I believe these child care centers would improve access to VA health care and enhance employee productivity."

Veterans of Foreign Wars Veterans Service Officer Lee F. Kichen said, "As someone who works on the Bay Pines campus, I have witnessed the glaring need for quality day for the children of returning veterans and VA employees. Lack of child care is really a barrier to treatment for these young veterans who gave so much when called upon to keep this country safe. There are countless cases of veterans who are also employees of the VA Medical Center and Regional Office who facing the daily challenges of not only finding quality child care, but, transporting their children to and from day care centers. I know of cases where over forty miles a day is added to the employee commute. Quality on-site child care will allow these employees to better focus on their work. The state organization of the Veterans of Foreign Wars thanks Mr. Buchanan for his this very important legislation."

State Representative Jennifer Carroll (R-Fleming Island) said, “As a retired veteran, Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the State of Florida, and mother of three, I fully understand the importance and the great need for the VA to provide child care services at their facilities. Many single female veterans do not have or cannot afford to leave their children in extended day care while they receive medical care. Having an onsite child care service, will afford many veterans peace of mind without an exorbitant expense of child care when they are in the process of undergoing sensitive medical evaluation and treatments. I applaud Congressman Buchanan for having the vision to look out for the people who have given the most to protect and serve this country.”

The pilot program would help determine whether providing day care services improves veterans’ access to outpatient treatment and help determine the level of demand for day care services as well as whether the program should be expanded to other locations.

Buchanan’s bill would also authorize the VA to provide day care and child development services at other selected major medical centers.

The two-term lawmaker is a member of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee and the Health Care Subcommittee. In 2009, Buchanan received the Veterans of Foreign Wars’ (VFW) Legislative Achievement Award from the Florida VFW for his service to members of the Armed Forces, veterans and their families.